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681 622 Arbitrariamente não são elles sós os senhores das vidas dos seus povos, ainda mesmo para a expiação dos crimes, porque quando estes se perpetram, sendo com effeito prohibido entre elles o furto intestino e o assassinio, apenas pode o chefe fazer entregar o delinquente ás partes prejudicadas; si elle roubou ellas o espancam muito a seu gosto; porem si elle matou, tambem o matam, sem que o supplicio deva estender-se ao tormento, ou a outro genero de morte, que não seja descarregar-lhe um pau no alto da cabeça e deitar-lhe os miolos fóra.

(They [the chiefs] are not the arbitrary and sole masters over their people's lives, not even as to the expiation of crimes, for when such are committed, and internal theft and murder are actually forbidden, the chief can merely have the culprit surrendered to the aggrieved party, who beat him up at will for theft. But if he has killed someone, they kill him too, the penalty not including torture nor any other mode of death than their crushing his skull with a blow of a club so that the brains come spurting out.)

682 628 As for murderers, it may be said to the honor of these Indians that neither I nor any person living has experienced a murder within the tribe. The only traditional instance relates to a time before firearms were known, that is, at least 124 years ago. Since it illustrates more than one point of social custom I shall briefly summarize the story:

One evening after the dance in the plaza, when the performers had dispersed, Karąti, a mature man famous as a warrior, seized the wife of a young lad named Wohõ' by the arm, led her to the edge of the plaza, and remained lying with her there till midnight. The following night he did the same. On the third evening Wohõ' was standing by the fire with his age class, when one of his kwỵ'nõ reproached him for his lack of courage. Wohõ' answered that he was not afraid of Karąti, but of starting a quarrel; but since his kwỵ'nõ had censured him he would act now. He took his bow, loosened the string, which he tied round the upper end, and waited. At the close of the dance Karąti once more seized the girl and took her to the edge of the plaza. After a while Wohõ' followed. Karąti was lying on his back, his arm resting on the girl's arm, whose leg crossed his body. Then Wohõ' pushed the tip of his stave through the man's stomach, pinning him to the ground. The man merely groaned and died.

The relatives of both men at once gathered in hostile groups, but the chiefs intervened, preventing a feud by inducing the murdered man's kin to accept wergild, viz. a bow, a large gourd bottle filled with ground nuts, other cultivated plants, and a plot of cleared land. This settled the difficulty for good.

It thus appears that composition was an ancient institution, the wergild being paid to prevent further bloodshed.

685 I have personally witnessed several cases of theft. A certain Tepyét (Hanging-fish) was until about his twentieth year a veritable kleptomaniac, stealing anything loose, from matches to oxen. In order to elude detection when crossing the open plaza with a stolen bush-knife he tied it to his ankle with a string, dragging it on the ground behind him so that at least from a distance he escaped notice because of the grass growing between the radial paths. But the tracks were found, and he was forced to make restoration. One day I myself missed a handful of coins from the top of a trunk standing against the wall. The thief had perforated the grass wall so as to be able to reach the money with his hand. I complained first to my "brother," the Chief Kukrãčą', who brought the matter up before the rest of the council, who entrusted my special hąpín, Čątú, with the case. He came, looked over the situation indoors, then walked round the house, inspected the perforation, and declared, "It was Tepyét!" Then, accompanied by Kukrãčą', he went to Tepyét, flatly accused him, and exacted the recovery of the money. Subsequently the thief tried to efface the bad impression created by rendering me various minor favors. During the final phase of his initiation he relapsed, stealing an ox with the aid of an accomplice, and grossly transgressed the rules of seclusion, so that he came within an ace of being disciplined by the council. However, after marriage he suddenly turned over a new leaf, becoming sensible and stable, so that during the four years since then I have had only favorable reports about him.

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685 The commonest form of larceny is that of women stealing one another's fruits in their plantations. If only small quantities are involved, the sufferer for the sake of harmony says nothing. Otherwise the aggrieved party, desiring to evade a quarrel with the thief, appeals to the councilors, who force the thief to make restitution or pay an indemnity. It is difficult for a native to steal undetected, for a single footprint is more damaging evidence than if he had left a visiting card. On a single occasion I overheard a woman loudly calling another names for more than five minutes, shouting over from her own house to the thief's, because of repeated plundering of the vituperator's field. Then her husband intervened to lead her indoors, which put a stop to the affair. Contrary to Ribeiro's evidence, I have never seen anyone beaten up for larceny.

685 177 As to the cattle lifting that has given the Rąmkõ'kamekra an unmerited notoriety in the state of Maranhão, a few explanatory statements are indicated. At first the cattle were killed because they were considered a palatable form of game. Later the Indians realized that the livestock was the property of their enemies, to whom they were thus able to cause damage. Still later they concluded treaties, were torn away from their habitat and their economic basis and were thus forced to steal cattle to stave off starvation in the new circumstances created by the Neobrazilians. Today the game of the country has been destroyed and driven off by the stock-breeding fazendeiros, so that when obliged, especially in connection with a tribal festival, to secure the requisite meat, the Indians have to hunt for weeks in vain. They consider themselves entitled now and then to eat some of the fazendeiros' livestock because these animals graze on Indian plantations, where they may even be deliberately driven by their owners with the intention of making life in the locality intolerable for the natives. From time to time the sertão settlers whip themselves into a moral indignation over the Indians' terrible depredations among the hard-won herds of the pitiable fazendeiros, who wear themselves to the bone year in, year out, only to see the whole produce of their labors disappear in the natives' bellies.

The worst enemy of the Rąmkõ'kamekra, José de Arruda, once set the annual number of cattle the Rąmkõ'kamekra stole from him at several hundred. I know that cattle lifting is a fact and am now in a position to gauge the damage done, which from 1928 to 1937 certainly did not exceed *six* head annually, the average being probably three to four, distributed over as many owners. Where there are no Indians, cattle theft also occurs; but within the Indian zone I have never heard a non-Indian charged with the crime.

733 177 689 A second form of crime occasioned by contact with civilization is due to intoxicants. The Brazilian criminal's eternal plea of extenuating circumstances because he had not been himself is nonsensical from the Indian point of view. However, that a man befuddled with whisky is irresponsible is obvious to the natives. At present they are familiar enough with the use of liquor, yet they are not quite clear how to reckon with misdeeds perpetrated while drunk; they vacillate between regarding the drunkard wholly unaccountable because of his condition and considering on a par crimes in sober and in intoxicated state.

As a matter of fact, crimes due to alcoholism are far less numerous than might be supposed, the following cases having come to my notice. The gravest was the rape of an immature girl by her father (p. 114), which resulted in his wife's divorcing him. In a second instance a drunken Indian rather seriously injured his wife by striking her hand with a bush-knife; but after a period of separation it was possible to reconcile the pair by calling attention to their children's interests. Otherwise, I

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lower end pointed on the sword-club pattern; the upper end, which is sometimes decorated with openwork over a span in length and often very prettily, terminates in comblike tines 4–6 cm. long (pl. 36). A soft sound is produced by moistening the skin on the inside of the upper arm with the tongue and stroking it back and forth with the tines. This sound is the signal by which the pepyé identify themselves on mutual visits at night.

A second object often found in the hands of pepyé, but otherwise only rarely (as a children's toy), is the bull-roarer (pĩkwęk) (pl. 35, *e*). After nightfall and before daybreak the class leader should swing the instrument, the alarm being passed on from cell to cell to make sure that its inmate has not fallen asleep, in which case the commandant would punish him. This was the subsequent statement of the commandant who had functioned in 1933, but during that festival the signal was certainly not given with regularity, but at best now and then. As a participant I only occasionally heard the booming sound for a few moments and did not learn its meaning until later. Once I overheard the following dialogue between two pepyé, which the commandant's explanation elucidates: "Did you hear my bull-roarer this noon?" "Yes!" "I thought you were asleep."

That the bull-roarer was part of the insignia peculiar to pepyé is indicated by the term pepyetokárčą in the speech of the Čą'kamekra, nowadays extinct as a separate tribe, whose specimens were considerably larger and of more careful make than their present Rąmkõ'kamekra equivalents. It seems clear that the comparative insignificance of the bull-roarer at initiation does not represent its original role.

A pepyé in retreat carefully extends the lobes of his ears to fit them for the earplugs (kúi) (see pl. 4, *a–c*). From time to time the youths widen this part of the ear, which is developed into a loop of skin, by inserting both their forefingers and then twisting the loop; at intervals of a few days the plugs are superseded by new and somewhat bigger ones.

The deputy daily notched a four-edged stick (amkrópupunčą, day counter) to keep tally of the days elapsed since the capture of the pepyé (pl. 35, *g*).

The pepyé passed the time with various diversions: one of them constructed a ventilator wheel, another carved a model of the type of motorboat plying on the Mearim, still others plaited little baskets, bags or mats of anajá grass, which they used in their subsequent parades and camps.

Sometimes when the village lacked meat, the pepyé furtively marched into the steppe to hunt. On one trip they stole a neighboring farmer's ox; the council by no means sanctioned this procedure, but had the errand boys bring the two chief malefactors to the plaza and gave them a terrific reprimand, so that they stood there quite abashed, notwithstanding the supercilious bearing at first assumed by one of the culprits. At night, before all their fellow novices, the two commandants once more subjected them to prolix harangues and reprimands.

Thus the weeks passed. In the meantime the wakõ'kama, being the youngest of the eastern classes and hence the novices' opponents, gathered daily in the western vụ'tẹ"s house and arranged many log races with the next older põhị'kama class camped on the west side. These latter, using the eastern vụ'tẹ' house as their lodge, belong to the same team league as the pepyé of 1933, whose subsequent position would also be on the west side of the plaza, to the north of their predecessors on that side.

Inspection of new leaders.—About 4:30 P.M. on May 23, the põhị'kama and wakõ'kama classes (western and eastern, respectively) began to dance jointly in the plaza, while the hąpín and pinẽwẹ'i of the eastern leader of the pepyé assembled